DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 218 694 CS 503 905

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TITLE Application of P. E. T. to Communication Consulting in Business and Industry.
PUB DATE May 82
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at th: Annual Meeting of the Eastern Communication Association (Hartford, CT, May 6-9, 1982).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; *Business Skills; *Consultants; *Cross Cultural Training; Intercultural Communication; Teacher Effectiveness; Teaching Methods; *Training Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Andragogy; *Program for Efficient Teaching

ABSTRACT

Just as pedagogy is the art and science of teaching children, andragogy is the art and science of leading adult learning. The pedagogical Program of Efficient Teaching (PET) process can be adapted to the predominately andragogical process of business consulting. Work at Honeywell, Incorporated in intercultural communication revealed how the five instructional skills of PET could be employed in a business environment. To fulfill the first requirement of PET, selecting the right objective at the correct level of difficulty, the consultant need only rely on the employees. The second skill, teaching to the objective, is also simplified in the andragogical situation because participants are learning only what they want to know. The third skill, maintaining the focus of the learner on the learning, also becomes largely the responsibility of the participant. The fourth skill, transference, however, is probably something business is not very concerned about, though the consultant should still consider it. Both consultant and participants must be equally responsible for the fifth skill, monitoring and adjusting. (JL)

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Application of P.E.T. to Communication Consulting in Business and Industry.

Presented by

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at

ECA

Instructional Practices

May 7, 1982

Hartford, Connecticut

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Because PET deals with the science of teaching where the emphasis is on the teacher learning to be more efficient, effective and relevant and because most consulting is basically teaching surely much carryover is immediately assumed. Since "efficient", "effective" and "relevant" are primary criteria used by business to evaluate consultants it would be to the advantage of both to become more familiar with PET.

Introduction

PET provides a pedagogical approach to teaching. Because PET is pedagogical in nature some problems are inherent in attempting to superimpose an intact PET process over business consulting, a predominantly andragogical process. However there are benefits to be gained and lessons to be learned by the consultant who is willing to adapt PET from a Program of Efficient Teaching to PET, a Program of Efficient Training.

In this paper I will first examine andragogy as it compares to pedagogy. Because education in the United States has traditionally been synonymous to "the teaching of children" pedagogy still dominates even our university system. There are inherent differences then between the academic approach to teaching and the consultant's approach to training, an andragogical process. These philosophical differences will be examined in relation to PET. Steps in the PET process that are particularly useful to the consultant will be highlighted followed by a discussion of those segments of the PET process which are problematic to the business consultant in communications.

Throughout this paper I will be referring to my most recent consulting project with Honeywell, Inc. which began last June. Honeywell had conducted a preliminary study of intercultural training (preparation as well

as debriefing) in their own corporation as well as other U.S. businesses. The findings indicated an apparent vacuum in this area. I was brought in to further investigate the report's findings and begin working on intercultural training programs where needed within Honeywell. One pilot program was presented in December and in January funding was allocated for six additional and varied workshops as well as other intercultural support programs such as the resource center, culture specific training films and management training modules. Granted, not all consulting will be similar to the intercultural training needs but the workshop is sufficiently representative of a large segment of the consulting business for it to accurately exemplify the larger class and provide us with a common focus.

Andragogy

The Greek noun agoge (the activity of leading) is combined with the stem andr (adult) and paid (child) to create complementary approaches to education: pedagogy is "the art and science of teaching children" and andragogy is the art and science of leading adult learning.

> "The word was first used by a German grammar school teacher, Alexander Kapp, in 1833, to describe the education theory of the Greek philosopher, Plato. Kapp distinguished andragogy from Social Pedagogy (basic remedial education for disadvantaged or handicapped adults) referring to andragogy as the normal and natural process of continuing education for adults."
>
> (Ingalls and Arceri, 1973)

Andragogy is not nearly as familiar to America as it is to Europe where universities in Germany, Poland, Hungary, the Netherlands and more recently in France, England and South America grant degrees with Andragogy as the major specialization. Professor Malcolm Knowles of Boston University

introduced andragogy to the U.S. and is internationally recognized for his creative developmental work in this relatively new field (Van Enckenort, 1971). In 1972 the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare published the 1st edition of A Trainer's Guide to Andragogy which was revised in 1973. This has since become the handbook of many consultants including those dealing in intercultural training. Information presented in this paper concerning andragogy is taken primarily from that publication.

At this time I cannot review andragogy but only hope to point out how this perspective in training can help modify PET so it is a viable program direction within business. In andragogy the teaching/learning transaction is a helping reciprocal relationship rather than a directing relationship. Multichannelled, two way communication occurs primarily in groups where the experiences of all are valued as resources for learning. Instead of the teacher making curriculum decisions for the learners the learners group themselves according to their own interests and diagnose their own learning needs with the help of the facilitator. In andragogy the learning revolves around working on today's problems today instead of grouping and classifying information into subjects to be studied now for use "some day". How many of us have assured our public speaking students that "some day" they will surely have to present a "real" public speech?

The development, organization and administration of programs in applied andragogy involve continuous circular application of the following seven steps:

"Setting a climate for learning
Establishing a structure for mutual planning
Assessing interests, needs and values
Formulating objectives
Designing learning activities
Implementing learning activities
Evaluating results (reassessing needs,
Interests and values)"

(Ingalls and Arceri, 1973)

(See also learning systems model, page 11, A Trainers Guide to Andragogy.) The primary function of the teacher (or facilitator) in an andragogical activity is that of managing or guiding the andragogical process itself, rather than managing the "content" of the learning as in traditional Pedagogy. The content of andragogical learning can thus be highly variable, based on the resources and interests of the learners and the needs of the institutions and organizations of which they are a part. While the facilitator need not be an "expert" in the learning content, it is most desirable for him to have some "content" knowledge if he is to guide the "process" effectively.

"Now we can see that Andragogy meets the conditions for continuing educational activity for adults:

"It is a way to learn directly from our experience
It is a process of reeducation that can reduce
social conflicts through interpersonal activity
in learning groups.
It is a process of self-directed learning from which
we can continuously reassess our own learning needs
as they emerge from the demands of the changing
situation."

(Ingalls and Arceri, 1973)

Note how the andragogical approach overlaps in critical areas with PET.

As I began my work at Honeywell my tendency was to revert back to my academic posture and tell them what they needed to know about intercultural communication. I was certainly the best qualified to write instructional objectives and design a workshop around those objectives. However it became more and more obvious as employees who had traveled internationally for Honeywell were interviewed and as our corporate-wide needs analysis was

tabulated that members of the Honeywell work force knew what was needed to do their job, or at least do it better. Their own experiences led them to desire intercultural training or they at least knew what questions they wanted answered prior to their intercultural business experience.

The results also provided us with natural groupings from out of the work force and this was not based solely on the employee's geographic destination. Management's chief needs and concerns were quite different from executive needs or the needs of the internal auditors. However, because the culture of American business does not fully support an andragogical approach to training many of these natural groupings had to be ignored. It was not profitable for the company in terms of man-time and transportation costs. Instead of natural groupings a variety of interests were drawn together in the workshop pilot which only drew participants from the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. As soon as one aspect of andragogy is effected the whole system is effected. Since we seldom, if ever, find a pure process of andragogy supported by American business its modification becomes extremely important to the success of the communication consultant. It is therefore as a guide to that adjustment from the ideal andragogy to the very practical and profit-oriented direction of business that I recommend PET to the consultant.

Most useful aspects of PET to the consultant.

Of the five instructional skills which are regarded within PET as the delivery system for instruction the most important to the consultant is selecting the right objective at the correct level of difficulty because this area of PET also includes the writing of behavioral objectives often referred to as competencies in recent years. As academicians it is often difficult to move from the pedagogical platform into the business

setting without feeling that you, the consultant, are suppose to know the "right" objective. The tendency seems to have been, especially in intercultural communications, a desire to spread the gospel of theory from the hallowed halls of the university into the secular city of business. In many cases the level of difficulty is not the primary concern: the consultant is usually dealing with people who are indeed capable of wallowing about in theory if that were THEIR objective. To establish what the objectives should be the consultant has only to rely on the employees themselves to tell him, if he cares to ask. Selecting the appropriate objectives should be a function of the participants and their perceived needs. This is the main reason why consultants caution others about marketing package programs. However even if the "right" general objectives are presented to the consultant by potential participants a clear training direction is not assured.

After months of compiling information from interviews with over thirty executives of Honeywell and finally receiving the compiled data from the needs questionnaire which had been sent out to over one thousand employees, a colleague, Deborah Baker, and myself began to write the actual behavioral objectives for the workshop. As much as we told ourselves, having been told by many others, how practical the workshop had to be, the one point of evaluation feedback that was repeated a number of times was the need to make the workshop MORE practical.

In order to write clear, explicit competencies or behavioral objectives as outlined in PET and as presented often here at ECA in the past five years requires training and practice. I have attended workshops presented by our panel chair, Dr. Levison, and have myself fallen with many others into the trap of assuming the task to be easy, even trite. The very simple practice sessions and discussions that followed demonstrated all too well how diffi-

cult the task really was. For the consultant, success, reputation and future employment may reside in their ability to mirror in the competencies the expressed needs of the employees. Business is always interested in seeing results. At Honeywell the accepted norm in announcing programs is to "bullet" what the employee will be able to do after participating. These competencies may be apparent through the new vocabulary that emerges from workshops and training sessions and become a vital part of the corporate culture. Language and culture are inseparable and in order for language to become a part of culture it has to tap into the fantasies of that culture (Bormann, 1980). Unless the needs of the participants, as they perceive them, are met this cannot happen.

For the consultant "teaching to the objective", PET's second instructional skill, should promote success if the objectives are andragogically correct. But, unlike the pedagogical PET, in business if participants identified the needs and objectives, then the burden of the second instructional skill will not weigh as heavily on the consultant. Although you seldom have a purely andragogical perspective in business you also are seldom in a pedagogical stance either. Instead of the burden of questioning being consultant-focused, participants question because they wish to know. They also challenge since they have their own experiences to draw from and relate to while considering new information (i.e. explanation). If the objective fits their needs they will not need to be refocused because of distractions. In fact, because of the andragogical approach, PET's second instructional skill is equally participated in by consultant and participants.

This same logic allows me to assume the participants' own responsibility to "maintain the focus of the learner on the learning", the third PET skill. But this is not true when we examine the fourth skill dealing with the principles of learning. In consulting the participants share the

responsibility of the first two principles, that of motivation and reinforcement, but the consultant stands more in the shoes of the teacher when it comes to retention and transfer. Business looks for signs that indicate retention has occurred and these often take the form of new language usage (new labels have been provided to describe the new knowledge), mnemonic devices that are shared, in jokes or shared allusions (at Honeywell the monkey had great significance for the Corporate Human Resource Development Department). Often oral rather than physical behavior is observable when dealing in organizational consulting from the communication perspective and the desired retention generally is the product of the basic skills we teach in the beginning public speaking course.

In discussing the fourth principle of learning, transference, I wonder if this is an actual goal or objective of business in general. Of course participants are expected to be able to transfer the information from the consulting sessions to their jobs. But does the organization expect, or even desire, the participants to see a larger picture where, if they were to be placed in a new position quite unlike their old, the employee would be able to utilize communication training? My impression is that it does not. Nor do employees seem to seek this beyond the immediate or direct need. In working in the intercultural area I found employees were not really interested in discussing American values. They wanted to get down to the "real" meat of the subject: their particular cultural interest. Nor did they participate willingly in discussions that attempted to take this culture specific information and relate it to communication between coworkers within Honeywell, male-female communication or vertical communication problems within the company. For many that simply wasn't today's problem. If andragogy directs the consultant it would seem that transference would often by by-passed. My personal pedagogical position is that it

should not be by-passed although transference is not my primary focus. Once the consultant makes that kind of decision PET is of great assistance. In fact, PET assists the consultant in identifying what it is that they consider necessary and important and what they do not as they approach business. Thus PET can provide personal assistance as well as being a general tool.

The fifth instructional skill, monitor and adjust, must be participated in equally by consultant and participants. Together they generate overt behavior based on the initial objectives. Participants may be more observant of behavior than the consultant since it is the participant who is dealing with problems and needs of now . . . today. They really are in the best position to interpret the behavior in terms of the expected learning and to determine the need for adjustment. Unlike the university system where all these are clearly in the hands of the teacher, the consultant's role is less independent of the wants and wishes of the participants themselves and/or management.

Problem areas for the consultant using PET

I think I have discussed some of these indirectly in the preceding section at least in reference to the specific five instructional skills that compose the delivery system for instruction. But is there a more general approach to PET and problems it raises for the consultant?

It has been extremely difficult for me to juggle back and forth between what I know the employees and management want and what I think they should have. I consider myself the expert in intercultural communication. Until I had gone beyond my own experiences and questions I was not aware of how much more there actually was to explore. How much am I willing to acknowledge and address the experiences and the perceived needs of the organization and allow that to direct the consulting in the

truly andragogical approach and what must I insist be involved in the substance of the consulting, not because it is requested or is a felt need, but because it would somehow be unethical not to? Intercultural communication will not be greatly improved because employees become armed with a list of do's and don'ts in doing business in the particular country that they will be visiting. Even with thousands of items the list would never be complete nor would they know how the list had been generated in order to generate some of their own items when in a situation not covered by the list. But to know more than the list is time consuming. Time is money in the U.S. Management does not want it spent on anything but the essentials. These are determined by the income they generate. Employees want to spend time getting answers they need in order to get to where they are going. Deviating for a moment from the intercultural example I am left to wonder at the communication consultants who can "solve" the company's problems in small group communication in a day or two, a week tops. That's what they want. Is that what I'm willing to deliver?

PET provides not only a prescriptive approach to teaching more efficiently, effectively and with more relevance for the academicians among us, but it also presents a frame from which the consultant can pick and choose while structuring their own scaffolding. Even more importantly it brings to light questions that the consultant might not otherwise be aware of and might not otherwise choose to answer. Indeed PET is a valuable tool for the consultant if not in quite the same manner as it is valuable to the teacher.